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SUBJECT: INTERIM REPORT ON MAP WORKSHOP
AT ABUJA JUNE 2-4, 2001

1. (U) This is a brief interim report; comprehensive report to follow.

State of play

2. (U) At the fifth session of the five-nation Steering Committee of the Millennium Partnership for African Recovery Programme (MAP) held at Pretoria in March it was agreed to convene a workshop to elaborate a detailed "Programme of Action" for implementing the basic MAP proposals developed during the first five Steering Committee meetings. Subsequently, the Steering Committee met at Abuja June 2-4 for a workshop chaired by South Africa and Nigeria with limited participation by Algeria, Egypt and Senegal. Sidebar meetings continued throughout the week of June 4, concluding on June 9.

3. (U) The MAP workshop session started with a five-member Steering Committee: Algeria, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt and Senegal. Subsequent to the official sessions, the Steering Committee was expanded to include four new members: Gabon, Mali, Tanzania and Mozambique. The new members participated as observers during the official sessions, but did not have representation in the breakout groups that met to develop action plans for achieving specific MAP objectives.

4. (SBU) The MAP workshop failed to achieve its stated objective of preparing detailed action plans for implementing the MAP objectives as set out in the theme document, version 3A. Specifically, Senegal's competing "Omega Plan" for infrastructure rehabilitation and development was not integrated into MAP proper and the several breakout groups developing sub-themes of the MAP did not finalize their products.

5. (SBU) Development assistance jargon characterized the breakout groups' discussions with their calls, e.g., for "rationalized regulatory structures, transparency, capacity building, sanctity of contract, private sector-led initiatives." Several of the groups did produce written reports, but most of these were more exercises in textbook responses with laundry lists of problems than substantive programs for development. Decision on integrating the "Omega Plan" into MAP was deferred for "later action."

Next Steps

6. (SBU) The official sessions closed on June 4 without a clear outline of the expectations for next steps. Next locations (see para 6) for meetings were discussed, but no official Steering Board decision was taken on precisely what were to be the parameters for further development of MAP. In a brief sidebar discussion with Ambassador Jeter, President Mbeki's Economic Advisor Wiseman Nkuhlu did offer his own thoughts impromptu, however:

-- MAP is a work in progress. Additional meetings will be required to "finalize" a MAP strategy paper for eventual presentation to potential donors.

-- MAP should be presented to OAU leadership at a "Special Council" or "Heads of State meeting" preceding the upcoming OAU Summit. OAU will be asked to endorse that MAP document as embodying the only valid continent-wide development program. MAP, however, must remain "separate and apart" from the OAU and staffed with its own secretariat.

-- The MAP leadership plans to approach G8 leadership at the G8 gathering in Genoa on July 1. The manner of the approach remains "undecided," but could take the form of a dinner hosted (at MAP's request) by Italy, the current chair, attended by the G8 leadership and the "big three" of MAP: South Africa, Algeria and Nigeria. An alternative could be the presentation of a brief paper (20 pages or so) at the margins of the G8 that outlines MAP expectations regarding assistance and donor coordination. Whatever the form the encounter takes, Nkuhlu identified these issues as the ones of initial MAP interest:

--- Discussion of the particulars of a global fund for combating HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases. South Africa is working directly with the WHO to ensure the presentation of a plan that is consistent with other offers on the table already.

--- Renewal of the discussion regarding, and a request for concrete follow up on, the G8's "pledge to bridge the digital gap" made at last year's G8 held at Guam.

--- Discussion of special WTO conditions for Africa that would permit the continent increased access to developed markets, i.e., Europe.

(And, to be added should the MAP Steering Committee actually develop an elaborated program in time for the Genoa meeting):

--- Discussion of a subset of the 72 infrastructure programs, e.g., roads, power, airports, needed to make African nations competitive in the global marketplace.

The Debate Continues: Next Locations

17. (U) Shortly after the official sessions ended, the Steering Committee decided on new venues to continue the debate over integration of the "Omega Plan," and to continue the work on forging a real plan of action for MAP:

June 11-15 Pretoria to discuss draft 3A program

June 18-20 Cairo to complete the 3A draft program

June 11-13 Dakar to settle on integrating the "Omega Plan" into MAP proper

COMMENT

18. (SBU) Comment. At Abuja, June 2-4, we saw no significant headway made in developing a goals-based consensus plan of action for MAP. As summarized succinctly by one of our Egyptian interlocutors, "No detailed action plan was developed beyond what exists in the 3A document already; not even the Omega Plan was integrated into MAP." Our evaluation is not that negative. A few of the working groups presented documents that eschewed rhetoric and were more than mere laundry lists of problems or wishes. Nevertheless, much remains to be done.

19. (SBU) Comment continued. The MAP has "issues,

not the least of which is the participants' unequal levels of commitment to the program. Without question, the Abuja session -- held in Nigeria to great fanfare by the press and government spokespersons -- was a South Africa-led and managed operation from start to finish. The Nigerian co-host responsibilities consisted mostly of co-chairing the general sessions and hosting dinners and cocktails. Substantive participation by the GON was uninspiring. For example, the Nigerian delegation showed up four hours late for the one session that they were to have chaired. All the major papers presented were South African drafts; South Africa chaired or led most of the meetings; the logistical support was provided by the Development Bank of South Africa and a private firm hired in South Africa was brought to Abuja to copy, collate, and distribute the papers, as well as to arrange for the meetings' venue and the housing and transportation of the attendees. Neither did Algeria or Egypt contribute much to the effort beyond a couple of uninspiring papers. End comment.

Jeter